CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A process operating on a computer system, the process for matching business partners, comprising:

receiving current presenter information that includes a plurality of current presenter parameters;

identifying at least one of the current presenter parameters as a private parameter;

receiving current searcher information that includes a plurality of current searcher parameters;

comparing current presenter parameters, including the private parameter, to corresponding current searcher parameters;

determining if the current presenter and the current searcher are a match; and

transmitting current presenter parameters, excluding any private parameters, to the current searcher.

2.   The process according to claim 1, further including the step of maintaining a current database of current searchers and current presenters.

3.   The process according to claim 1, further including the step of maintaining a historical database of past successful matches between past searchers and past presenters.

4.   The process according to claim 3, further including the steps of:

interpreting one of the current presenter parameters to indicate a desired outcome;

extracting from the historical database a set of similar past presenters that have parameters similar to those of the current presenter; and

defining a corresponding set of similar past searchers, each searcher in the set of similar past searchers having reached the desired outcome with a corresponding past presenter in the set of similar past presenters.

5.   The process according to claim 4, wherein a goodness-of-fit factor is used in selecting the set of similar past presenters, the goodness-of-fit factor indicative of a minimum number of parameters that must match.

6.   The process according to claim 4 further including the step of reviewing the set of similar past searchers to identify a current searcher, and arranging for the selected current searcher to receive the transmitted current presenter parameters.

7. The process according to claim 4 further including the step of selecting matching current searchers from a database of current searchers, the matching current searchers having parameters similar to those in the set of similar past searchers, and selected to receive the transmitted current presenter parameters.

8. The process according to claim 7, wherein a goodness-of-fit factor is used in selecting the current searcher, the goodness-of-fit factor indicative of the minimum number of parameters that must match.

9. The process according to claim 8, wherein a goodness-of-fit factor is used in selecting the set of similar past presenters, the goodness-of-fit factor indicative of a minimum number of parameters that must match.

10. The process according to claim 3, further including the steps of:

interpreting one of the current presenter parameters to indicate a desired outcome;

extracting from the historical database a set of similar past presenters that have parameters similar to those of the current presenter;

defining a corresponding set of similar past searchers, each searcher in the set of similar past searchers having reached the desired outcome with a corresponding past presenter in the set of similar past presenters;

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selecting matching current searchers from a database of current searchers, the matching current searchers having parameters similar to those in the set of similar past searchers;

extracting from the historical database a set of similar past searchers that have parameters similar to those of the current searcher;

defining a corresponding set of similar past presenters, each presenter in the set of similar past presenters having reached the desired outcome with a corresponding past searcher in the set of similar past searchers;

selecting matching current presenters from a database of current presenters, the matching current presenters having parameters similar to those in the set of similar past presenters;

finding the current presenter in the selected matching current presenters; and

finding the current searcher in the selected current matching searchers.

11. The process according to claim 1, wherein the determining step further includes using a goodness-of-fit factor indicative of the minimum number of parameters that must match.

12. The process according to claim 1 wherein the identifying step includes identifying presenter parameters using two privacy levels, public or private.

13. The process according to claim 1 wherein the identifying step includes identifying presenter parameters using more than two levels of privacy.

14. The process according to claim 1, further including the step of receiving from the presenter a value setting the minimum number of private parameters that must be used in the determining step.

15. The process according to claim 1, further including receiving from the searcher a value setting the maximum number of private variables that are allowed not to match in the determining step.

16. The process according to claim 15, further including receiving from the presenter a value setting an acceptable limit on the value the searcher sets as the maximum number of private variables that are allowed not to match in the determining step.

17. The process according to claim 1, further including the step of providing the computer systems as a server portion and a client portion.

18. The process according to claim 17, wherein the client portion is provided as a mobile wireless device.

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19. A method for automatically and confidentially matching an investor with an early-stage company, the method operating on a processor, comprising:

receiving investor information from the investor, the investor information including private investor data and sharable investor data;

receiving company information from the early-stage company, the company information including private company data and sharable company data;

comparing the investor information to the company information, including private and sharable data;

identifying a match responsive to the comparison; and

transmitting only sharable investor data to the company, and only sharable company data to the investor.

20. A method of using business information in an on-line environment while maintaining confidentiality, comprising:

accessing a template input form, the form having a plurality of input parameters;

providing data for at least some of the parameters, the provided data parameters forming the business information;

setting a security level for the provided data parameters, at least some of the provided data parameters set with a private security level;

authorizing an electronic intermediary to use all of the business information in a search for a business partner; and

restricting the electronic intermediary from disclosing to the business partner any of the private data parameters.

21. The method according to claim 20 wherein the step of setting the security level includes accepting a default security level.